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NEWS RELEASE

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Clark County, Health Board agree to reorganize health services

Vancouver, WA - Planning will begin immediately for Clark County to provide services currently provided by the Southwest Washington Health District, which serves Clark and Skamania counties.

The Board of Health, which oversees the Health District, and the Board of Clark County Commissioners agreed today that strategic planning for the health district will focus on a more economical approach to service delivery in Clark County.

Under state law, counties are responsible for providing public health services. These responsibilities may be handled by a health district, by the county, or through contractual arrangements.

At present, health district services include those associated with public health, such as childhood immunizations, and environmental services involving sewage, solid waste, and water quality. Federal, state, and local agencies provide funding. Most of the local funding comes from Clark County.

The Board of County Commissioners expressed a need to explore options for the county to deliver health services with greater economy and efficiency.

"In light of the voters' repeated call to limit taxes and to streamline government services, we feel compelled to look at new ways for meeting public and environmental health obligations for our region," said Judie Stanton, who chairs the Board of Clark County Commissioners.

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For its part, the Board of Health agreed to spend at least six months developing a transition plan to address the needs of Clark and Skamania counties.

"It is critical that we respond to budget tightening at both the state and local levels," said Mary Kufeldt-Antle, a Camas city councilmember who chairs the health board. "We are hopeful that a greater consolidation of services will result in greater efficiencies throughout the counties."

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